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AUTHOR Ediger, Marlow
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ABSTRACT

Following a brief discussion of some characteristics of the Amish culture, data on work study skills from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills are reported for 23 pupils in grades 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8 in Pleasant Hill School near Bloomfield, Iowa. Percentile ranks ranged from 5 to 83. Eleven pupils scored above the fifteenth percentile on map skills and on use of reference materials, while 12 were above the fifteenth percentile on the total score for the Work Study Skills subtest. (MNS)

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OLD ORDER AMISH PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT IN WORK STUDY SKILLS

by

Marlow Ediger, Professor of Education

Northeast Missouri State University
Division of Education

Kirksville, MO 63501

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OLD ORDER AMISH PUPILS, CULTURE, AND MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT

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The Old Order Amish are a rural people and generally are farmers. They utilize draft horses and horse-drawn farm machinery in farming operations, rather than self-propelled combines with air-conditioned cabs and tractors with power steering and hydraulic lifts. Horses and buggies are utilized for transportation rather than modern automobiles. In the home setting, there are no electrical outlets. Thus, no television sets, radios, automatic clothes washers and dryers, and dishwashers are in evidence in the home setting.

Generally, the Old Order Amish have their own parochial schools. Usually, Old Order Amish teachers teach in these schools. Eighth grade education is terminal. The writer has studied educational practices in Pleasant Hill School, near Bloomfield, Iowa, over a period of years. On the school grounds, the following playground equipment is in evidence: a teeter totter, swings, and a merry-go-round. Five or six horses are housed in a horse barn on the school grounds during the school day. Also, five to six carriages are located near the horse barn. An outdoor water pump is used to pump water for school use. Since no electrical outlets exist in the school building, audio-visual aids such as films, filmstrips, slides, and transparencies are definitely not used in teaching pupils. The Amish believe very strongly in "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Exodus 20:4). Thus, also, very little is done in the area of art work. Pupils have drawn and colored illustrations pertaining to content in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). One pupil completed a picture on "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid," (Matthew 5:14). A different pupil completed an illustration on

"And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him also have your cloak" (Matthew 5:40). A few secular illustrations are also completed by pupils, such as a cardinal in a tree. The cardinal is made of red and black crepe paper. The art work is posted on the bulletin board.

The writer is amazed at the diligence of Old Order Amish pupils in completing assignments in the school setting. Seemingly, each pupil rather continuously works to complete requirements. Assignments for each grade level and each curriculum area are written on the chalkboard. When pupils in a grade level recite to the teacher what has been learned, feedback is given to each learner in terms of what was done incorrectly. The involved pupil then remediates deficiencies. Very few pupils ask help from the teacher after recitations have been completed and assignments at desks are being pursued.

At recess time, Old Order Amish pupils play actively using the merry-go-round, swings or teeter totter. Softball is also played frequently when the weather is appropriate. To be a successful Old Order Amish adult requries a strong physical body. Methods of farming and housekeeping in Amish society emphasize heavy manual labor.

It appears that Old Order Amish education emphasizes basic subject matter learnings in the classroom as well as informal playground activities at recess time. Intrinsic motivation seems to be inherent within Old Order Amish pupils in studying the four r's -- reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion.

Achievement in Work Study Skills

In February, 1980 twenty-three pupils in Pleasant Hill School in

grades 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8 took the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. There were no fifth grade pupils in school. Six third grade pupils achieved the following in the Work Study Skills subtest of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills:

	Maps		References		Total Work Study Skills	
	GE*	PR**	GE	PR	GE	PR
Pupil one	4.3	73	5.1	90	4.7	83
Pupil two	3.1	39	3.3	43	3.2	41
Pupil three	2.1	14	2.7	26	2.4	17
Pupil four	2.1	14	2.9	31	2.5	20
Pupil five	2.7	28	3.3	43	3.0	35
Pupil six	3.7	57	3.6	54	3.6	55

Two of six third grade Old Order Amish pupils had percentile ranks above fifty in the area of map learnings. In ascending order these percentile ranks were 57 and 73. Four of six third grade pupils had percentile ranks below fifty in map learnings. In ascending order, these percentile ranks were 14, 14, 28, and 39.

Two of six third grade pupils had percentile ranks above fifty in the use of reference materials. These percentile ranks were 54 and 90. The remaining four pupils, in ascending order, had percentile ranks of 26, 31, 43, and 43.

For the total Work Study Skills subtest, the six third grade pupils, in ascending order, had percentile ranks of 17, 20, 35, 35, 41, and 83.

Seven fourth grade pupils revealed the following achievement in Work Study Skills, according to the Iowa Test of Basic Skills:

* GE = Grade equivalent

** PR = Percentile rank

	Maps		References		Total Work Study Skills	
	GE	PR	GE	PR	GE	PR
Pupil one	4.1	40	5.9	83	5.0	64
Pupil two	2.3	7	4.1	39	3.2	19
Pupil three	2.9	15	4.2	42	3.6	28
Pupil four	3.7	31	4.4	48	4.0	38
Pupil five	4.3	45	3.7	29	4.0	38
Pupil six	4.1	40	4.9	61	4.5	51
Pupil seven	4.8	58	4.6	53	4.7	56

In ascending order, the seven fourth grade pupils had percentile ranks of 7, 15, 31, 40, 40, 45, and 58 in map skills. In the use of references, three pupils had percentile ranks above fifty. These were, in ascending order, 53, 61, and 83. The remaining four fourth grade pupils, in ascending order, had percentile ranks of 29, 39, 42, and 48. For the total Work Study Skills subtest, three of seven pupils had percentile ranks above fifty. In ascending order, these percentile ranks were 51, 56, and 64. The remaining four pupils, in ascending order, had the following percentile ranks: 19, 28, 38, and 38.

Five sixth grade pupils revealed the following Work Study Skills test results from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills:

	Maps		References		Total Work Study Skills	
	GE	PR	GE	PR	GE	PR
Pupil one	6.5	50	5.8	37	6.2	46
Pupil two	6.5	50	7.9	76	7.2	66
Pupil three	7.6	71	7.9	76	7.8	77
Pupil four	8.9	91	5.8	37	7.4	70
Pupil five	9.0	92	7.1	61	8.0	80

All five sixth grade pupils had percentile ranks of fifty and higher in map skills. In ascending order, these percentile ranks were 50, 50, 71, 91, and 92. Three of five sixth grade pupils had a percentile rank above fifty in use of reference materials. In ascending order, these percentile ranks were 61, 76, and 76. Two remaining sixth grade pupils had percentile ranks of 37 and 37. Four of five sixth grade pupils scored above the fiftieth percentile rank in the total Work Study Skills subtest. In ascending order, these percentile ranks were 66, 70, 77, and 80. The remaining sixth grade pupil had a percentile rank of 46.

Three seventh grade pupils achieved the following in Work Study Skills, according to the Iowa Test of Basic Skills:

	Maps		References		Work Study Skills Total	
	GE	PR	GE	PR	GE	PR
Pupil one	8.7	71	9.4	81	9.0	77
Pupil two	4.5	10	4.5	8	4.5	5
Pupil three	6.2	28	6.5	33	6.4	31

Three seventh grade pupils, in ascending order, had percentile ranks of 10, 28, and 71 in map skills. These pupils had percentile ranks of 8, 33, and 81 in use of reference materials. In the total Work Study Skills subtest, in ascending order, the percentile ranks were 5, 31, and 77.

Two eighth grade pupils achieved the following in Work Study Skills, according to the Iowa Test of Basic Skills:

	Maps		References		Work Study Skills Total	
	GE	PR	GE	PR	GE	PR
Pupil one	9.4	66	9.1	60	9.2	63
Pupil two	9.4	66	9.9	73	9.6	70

Both eighth grade pupils scored well above the fiftieth percentile in map skills (percentile ranks of 66 and 66), use of references (percentile ranks of 60 and 73), and Work Study Skills total (percentile ranks of 63 and 70).

Concluding Statements

To the observer, Old Order Amish pupils appear to be inwardly motivated in studying, in learning, and in achieving. Eighth grade basically is terminal education. Old Order Amish society presents a model for hard work in using manual labor rather than machines to complete tasks in the rural, farming environment.

Old Order Amish achievement in Pleasant Hill School, near Bloomfield, Iowa reveals the following percentile ranks in the Work Study Skills subtest in ascending order: 5, 17, 19, 20, 28, 31, 35, 38, 38, 41, 46, 51, 55, 56, 63, 64, 66, 70, 70, 77, 77, 80, and 83. Twelve of twenty-three pupils had a percentile rank of above fifty in the total Work Study Skills subtest. For the Composite Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Old Order Amish pupils in Pleasant Hill School, in ascending order, had the following percentile ranks: 8, 8, 16, 19, 21, 23, 40, 45, 47, 53, 53, 59, 59, 61, 65, 66, 66, 69, 71, 77, 79, 83, and 84. Thus, fourteen of twenty-three pupils had percentile ranks of above fifty in the Composite Iowa Test of Basic Skills.